

Message Text

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ACTION INR-10

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PEKING 2304

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: CH, US, UR
SUBJ: PEOPLE'S DAILY EXPLAINS CURRENT U.S.-SOVIET DISPUTE

REF: PEKING 2147

1. SUMMARY. PEOPLE'S DAILY JULY 27 DETAILED THE STEPS
ANNOUNCED BY THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION BECAUSE OF MOSCOW'S
"TREATMENT" OF SOVIET DISSIDENTS AND U.S. REPORTERS. IN
AN ACCOMPANYING SIGNED ARTICLE, HOWEVER, IT IGNORED THIS
FACTOR AND INSTEAD TRACED THE CURRENT DISPUTE TO DIFFERENCES
OVER SALT AND TO SOVIET EXPANSIONIST ACTIVITIES IN AFRICA
OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS. END SUMMARY.

2. IN A JULY 27 NEWS ARTICLE, PEOPLE'S DAILY REPORTED THAT
THE U.S. HAD SUSPENDED MOST OFFICIAL VISITS TO THE SOVIET
UNION, AND HAD JOINED THE U.K. IN CANCELLING MILITARY PAR-
TICIPATION IN A SOVIET HELICOPTER COMPETITION. A JULY 25
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NCNA ARTICLE, NOT CARRIED IN THE CHINESE-LANGUAGE PRESS,
HAD NOTED THE ADMINISTRATION'S ACTIONS TO DENY AN EXPORT
LICENSE FOR THE SPERRY-UNIVAC COMPUTER AND TO REQUIRE LICENSES
FOR ALL EXPORTS TO THE SOVIET UNION OF OIL PRODUCTION
EQUIPMENT.

3. THE JULY 27 ARTICLE ALSO REPORTED GENERAL JONES' JULY

25 STATEMENT THAT THE U.S. SHOULD MAINTAIN A FIRM ATTITUDE VIS-A-VIS THE SOVIETS AND THAT EVEN IF A SALT AGREEMENT IS SUCCESSFULLY CONCLUDED, AMERICAN EXPENDITURES ON STRATEGIC WEAPONRY WILL STILL INCREASE.

4. IN AN ACCOMPANYING ARTICLE BY THE PSEUDONYMOUS MEI PING ("AMERICA COMMENTATOR"), PEOPLE'S DAILY TRACES THE DEVELOPMENT OF U.S.-SOVIET TENSIONS OVER THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS. IT CLAIMS THAT AS A RESULT OF AMERICAN CONCESSIONS LAST YEAR IN SALT, MANY PEOPLE IN THE U.S. BEGAN TO CALL FOR CHANGES. IT CITES THE PRESIDENT'S WAKE FOREST SPEECH AS A RESPONSE TO GROWING SOVIET INTERFERENCE IN THE HORN OF AFRICA, AND HIS ANNAPOLIS ADDRESS AS AN ANSWER TO THE SOVIET-CUBAN INSPIRED INVASION OF ZAIRE.

5. THE ARTICLE GOES ON TO CHARACTERIZE THE SOVIET RESPONSE IN THE JUNE 17 PRAVDA ARTICLE AS A FIERCE OVERALL ATTACK ON THE UNITED STATES, AND QUOTES WESTERN PRESS CHARACTERIZATION OF THE ARTICLE AS THE "BROADEST AND MOST DIRECT ATTACK TO DATE" ON THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION. MEI STATES THAT THIS KREMLIN ATTEMPT TO PRESSURE THE U.S. WAS ACCOMPANIED BY ATTEMPTS TO DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN FRIENDS AND OPPONENTS OF DETENTE WITHIN THE U.S. GOVERNMENT. MEI SARCASTICALLY DEFINES THE FORMER AS THOSE WHO ADVOCATE RESPONDING TO SOVIET EXPANSIONISM WITH "WISDOM," "RESTRAINT," AND "COMPROMISE".

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6. MEI'S ARTICLE DESCRIBES PRESIDENT CARTER'S ATTITUDE AS SOMETIMES UNYIELDING, SOMETIMES SOFT, AND STATES THAT THIS INCONSISTENCY HAS GIVEN MOSCOW PROPAGANDA OPPORTUNITIES. MEI NEVERTHELESS FINDS THAT "EVEN IN THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT" THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO ARE BEGINNING TO DISCOVER THAT SOVIET EXPANSIONISM IS INCOMPATIBLE WITH DETENTE.

7. COMMENT: THE MEI PING ARTICLE IS NOTABLE FOR OMITTING ALL MENTION OF THE DISSIDENT TRIALS AS A FACTOR IN CURRENT SOVIET-U.S. TENSION. IT ALSO IGNORES THE RECENT SOVIET CAMPAIGN AGAINST CLOSER SINO-AMERICAN COOPERATION. INSTEAD, IT ALLOWS CHINESE READERS TO CONCLUDE THAT THE MAJOR CAUSES OF THE PRESENT STATE OF OUR RELATIONS WITH MOSCOW ARE SOVIET MOVES IN AFRICA AND SOVIET TACTICS IN SALT, AND THE UNITED STATES' GRADUAL AND SPORADIC ATTEMPTS TO DEAL WITH THEM.

8. THE PRC PRESS' RELUCTANCE TO GO INTO DETAIL ON THE DISSIDENT QUESTION HAS BEEN OBVIOUS FOR SOME TIME. WHILE THE U.S. ATTENTION TO HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN THE SOVIET UNION WAS NOTED ON A NUMBER OF OCCASIONS BY PRC MEDIA IN 1977, IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN TREATED AS A TACTICAL MOVE BY THE

U.S. GOVERNMENT, AND THE ACTIVITIES OF THE DISSIDENTS
THEMSELVES HAVE BEEN PASSED OVER IN SILENCE. THE CURRENT
TREATMENT OF THIS ISSUE INDICATES ONCE AGAIN THE SENSITIVITY
WITH WHICH THE PRC VIEWS THE QUESTION OF DISSIDENT BEHAVIOR.
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